

Foster Care Services – Independent Living
Policy and Procedures
Service Chapter 624-10

North Dakota Department of Human Services
600 East Boulevard Dept 325
Bismarck, ND 58505-0250

Foster Care Services – Independent Living
Policies and Procedures

Division 20
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Foster Care Services - Independent Living 624-10

Definitions 624-10-01

Independent Living 624-10-01-05 (9/15/06 ML 3048)

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Independent Living is an ongoing process that results with youth having the resources and skills to live successfully as an adult, thus “Independent” of the various systems. Youth do not “attend” Independent Living, nor do they “complete” it. Independent Living is not a “Permanency Goal”.

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**Chafee Foster Care Independence Program
624-10-01-10**

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The Independent Living Initiative was authorized in 1986 under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act. In 1999, the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 was passed, replacing the earlier initiative, and expanded on the services and supports available to foster youth. In 2001, Congress amended the "Promoting Safe and Stable Families Act; Title 2, Section 201 of this Act established the Educational and Training Voucher (ETV) Program. The ETV component offers former foster youth the opportunity to further their education.

**State Independent Living Program, a.k.a. State
Chafee Foster Care Independence Program
624-10-01-15**

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The Department of Human Services, Children and Family Services Division, administers the Chafee Grant, and supervises the State-Wide Independent Living Program.

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State Independent Living Administrator
624-10-01-20

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Employee of the Department of Human Services, Children and Family Services Division. Responsible for overseeing the Regional Chafee Programs, and for Administration of the Chafee Grant.

**Regional Independent Living Programs, a.k.a. Chafee
Foster Care Independence Programs 624-10-01-25
(9/15/06 ML 3048)**

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This refers to the Regional Independent Living Programs located within each of the 8 Regions of the state. These programs are state-supervised, and administered by county and private providers. Regional IL Programs are responsible for providing IL Programming to all eligible youth within the region, regardless of the county the youth resides in. The Regional IL Coordinator from the Region in which the custodial county/DJS is located, is responsible for providing programming to all eligible youth, regardless of the location of the youth's placement.

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Regional Independent Living Coordinators
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Independent Living Coordinators are employees of a designated County or Private Provider, and are responsible for implementation of the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program within the Region.

Foster Care 624-10-01-35
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For the purposes of this policy, the definition of “foster care” is as follows: 24 hour substitute care for children placed away from their parents or guardians and for whom the state agency has placement and care responsibility. (Definition taken from “Making Sense of the ASFA Regulations, American Bar Association, p220).

This includes, but is not limited to:

1. Placement in foster family homes
2. Relative foster care homes
3. Residential Child Care Facilities
4. Emergency shelters
5. Residential Treatment Centers
6. Pre-adoptive homes

Detention facilities, training schools, and any other facility operated primarily for the detention of children who have been determined to be delinquent are not considered foster care placements. Thus, these youth are not eligible for Chafee funded programming or flex funds while in that particular placement.

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**"Aging Out of Foster Care" Definition 624-10-01-40
(9/15/06 ML 3048)**

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For the purpose of this manual, "Aging out of Foster Care" is defined as: A youth being discharged from foster care at the age of 18 or older.

Trial Home Visits in Relation to "Aging Out of Foster Care" 624-10-01-40-05

(9/15/06 ML 3048)

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For the purpose of this manual, a youth will meet the definition of "Aging Out of Foster Care, if the youth is discharged from a licensed foster care placement at the age of 17 ½ - 18 years of age on "Trial Home Visit" status and all of the following are present:

1. The county/DJS retains custody until the age of 18.
2. The youth is open within the foster care system on their 18th birthday.
3. There is a current court order at the time the youth turns 18 years of age.
4. Child and Family team Meetings are occurring as required, with the latest being held within the 3 months prior to the 18th birthday.
5. There is a current single plan of care when the youth turns 18, with the "Trial Home Visit" clearly documented.

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Flexible Funds 624-10-01-45
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Flex Funds are payments made, or tangible resources given, directly to the eligible youth, or made to a vendor on behalf of the eligible youth. Flex Funds fall into two categories: "General" or "Room and Board". Eligibility requirements vary for the two categories.

Authority References 624-10-05
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1. Foster Care Independence Act of 1999
2. Promoting Safe and Stable Families Act; Title 2, Section 201
3. "Making Sense of the ASFA Regulations," American Bar Association
4. "Frequently Asked Questions III," The National Foster Care Coalition

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**Purposes of the Chafee Foster Care Independence
Program 624-10-10
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Youth aging out of foster care are in unique and often difficult position. Some youth have been in foster care for a number of years. At the age of 18, they find themselves alone, without the supports provided by the child welfare system. They are expected to live on their own, go to school hold down jobs, pay rent and bills, find medical care, and attend to all of their other needs at a time when young people who have not been in foster care are still under the protective care of their parents. Far too many former foster youth find themselves without adequate supports and permanent connections; facing homelessness, unemployment, single parenthood, mental health/addiction issues, and legal difficulties. The Foster Care System's commitment to foster youth cannot end when they are discharged from foster care. The overall purpose of the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program is to improve the lives of youth aging out of foster care.

**The Six Purposes of the Chafee Foster Care
Independence Program 624-10-10-05
(9/15/06 ML 3048)**

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1. To identify children who are likely to remain in foster care until 18 years of age and to help these children make the transition to self-sufficiency by providing services such as assistance in obtaining a high school diploma, career exploration, vocational training, job placement and retention, training in daily living skills, training in budgeting and financial management skills, substance abuse prevention, and preventive health activities (including smoking avoidance, nutrition education, and pregnancy prevention);
2. To help children who are likely to remain in foster care until 18 years of age receive the education, training, and services necessary to obtain employment;
3. To help children who are likely to remain in foster care until 18 years of age prepare for and enter post secondary training and educational institutions;
4. To provide personal and emotional support to children aging out of foster care, through mentors and the promotion of interactions with dedicated adults;
5. To provide financial, housing, counseling, employment, education and other appropriate support and services to former foster care recipients between 18 and 21 years of age to complement their own efforts to achieve self-sufficiency and to assure that program participants recognize and accept their personal responsibility for preparing for and then making the transition from adolescence to adulthood; and responsibility for preparing for and then making the transition from adolescence to adulthood; and

To make available vouchers for education and training, including postsecondary training and education, to youths who have aged out of foster care.

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**Chafee Foster Care Independence Program Outcomes
624-10-15**

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The goal of the ND Foster Care System is that every youth who lived in foster care, as a teenager will meet the 7 Chafee Outcomes by age 21.

**The 7 Outcomes of the Chafee Foster Care
Independence Program 624-10-15-05
(9/15/06 ML 3048)**

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1. All youth leaving the foster care system shall have **sufficient economic resources to meet their daily needs.**
2. All youth leaving the foster care system shall have a **safe and stable place to live.**
3. All youth leaving the foster care system shall attain **academic or vocational/educational goals** that are in keeping with the youth's abilities and interests.
4. All youth leaving the foster care system shall have a **sense of connectedness** to persons and community.
5. All youth leaving the foster care system shall **avoid illegal/high risk behaviors.**
6. All youth leaving the foster care system shall **postpone parenthood** until financially established and emotionally mature.
7. All youth leaving the foster care system shall have **access to physical and mental health services.**

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The Wraparound Philosophy 624-10-20 (9/15/06 ML 3048)

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Children and Family Services has adopted the **Wraparound Process** as the philosophical base for the overall Foster Care service delivery system, including Independent Living Programming. The following is an outline of the values, principles and beliefs of the Wraparound Process:

- Unconditional commitment to working with families and children (youth) is provided.
- Families (youth) are full and active partners in the process.
- Services are culturally responsive.
- This is a team driven process.
- Services focus on strengths and competencies of families (youth), not on deficiencies and problems.
- Service plans are outcome based.
- Services and plans are individualized to meet the needs of families and children (youth)
- Resources and supports, both in and out of the family are utilized for solutions.
- People are the greatest resource to one another.

Regional Coordinators will be active members of the Child and Family Team for all youth they are working with. The Single Plan of Care Document will include needs, goals and tasks related to Independent Living, and will serve as the Chafee Plan.

Components of the ND Chafee Foster Care Independence Program 624-10-25

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There are 3 Components to the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program.

1. Current Foster Care Youth Component
2. Former Foster Care Youth Component
3. ETV Program Component

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**Current Foster Care Youth Component 624-10-25-05
(9/15/06 ML 3048)**

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This component consists of those youth who are currently in foster care.

Required IL Programming (Priority I)

624-10-25-05-05

(9/15/06 ML 3048)

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It is a requirement that custodians refer all youth who meet the following criteria to a Regional Independent Living Program.

It is a requirement that Regional Independent Living Programs provide programming to all youth meeting the following criteria.

The youth is:

1. Youth is currently in foster care, **and**
2. Youth is 16 years of age or older, **and**
3. Youth has been identified as "likely to age out of foster care", **and**
4. Youth agrees to be an active participant.

It is essential that these youth participate in IL Programming as soon as possible to ensure the best opportunity for success.

The Regional IL Coordinator and the Custodian will work collaboratively to ensure that these youth are enrolled in the Program. However, it is the Custodian's responsibility to initiate the referral.

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Optional IL Programming (Priority II)
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Current foster youth, age 14 or older, and **not** identified as “likely to age out of foster care” will be considered for participation in the Regional Independent Living Programs. These requests will be considered on the youth’s individualized needs and program availability.

**Former Foster Youth Component 624-10-25-10
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This component consists of young adults who were formerly in foster care.

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Required IL Programming (Priority I)
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It is a requirement that Regional Independent Living Programs provide programming to all youth meeting the following criteria.

1. Young adult aged out of foster care at the age of 18 or older, and
2. Young adult has not reached the age of 21, and
3. Young adult is an active participant in their IL Plan.

Young adults who refuse services or refuse to be active participants will not be provided Chafee programming or funding.

The majority of these young adults will self refer, or will be referred by a community provider.

There should be very few former foster youth who enroll in IL after aging out of care due to the requirement that custodians refer all youth to an IL Program immediately upon the 'likely to age out of care' determination being made.

Optional IL Programming (Priority II)

624-10-25-10-10

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Former foster youth, who were in foster care at the age of 16 or older, yet did not age out of foster care, will be considered for participation in the Regional Independent Living Programs. These requests will be considered on the youth's individualized needs, program availability, and the young adult's willingness to participate.

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Education and Training Voucher Component
624-10-25-15

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The Chafee Education and Training Voucher Program provides resources specifically to meet the education and training needs of youth aging out of foster care.

The ETV Program was established by Congress as part of reauthorization of the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Act, known as the “Promoting Safe and Stable Families Amendments of 2001” (P.L 107-133). Title 2, Section 201 of the Act amended the Foster Care Independence Act by adding ETVs as the sixth purpose of the Chafe Foster Care Independence Program.

Eligibility 624-10-25-15-05
(9/15/06 ML 3048)

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Youth meeting all of the following criteria will be considered for an Education and Training Voucher Award.

1. Youth that were discharged from foster care on their 18th birthday, or continue to be in foster care past their 18th birthday, provided they were in foster care for at least one year, and have not reached their 21st birthday at the time of application.
2. Youth who were adopted from foster care after age 16, but have not reached their 21st birthday.
3. Youth participating in the ETV Program on their 21st birthday can remain eligible until they turn 23, as long as they are enrolled and making satisfactory progress toward completing their post-secondary education or training program.
4. Youth who are United States Citizens or qualified non-citizens.
5. Youth who are, or will be enrolled into a program at an accredited or pre-accredited college, university, technical or vocational school.
6. Youth agrees to be an active participant in the Regional IL Program, and remain involved while they are receiving ETV funding.

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**Miscellaneous Information Pertaining to the ETV
Component 624-10-25-15-10**

**Military Duty 624-10-25-15-10-05
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National Guard Soldiers who are attending a college/training program funded by an ETV when they are called to active duty will be eligible for an award upon their return, regardless of their age at return, providing they re-enroll at an accredited Institution of Higher Education within 3 months of their return. The maximum “age” requirement will be extended by the amount of time they were on active duty.

Attendance at an Institution of Higher Education
624-10-25-15-10-10

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Recipients of the ETV must attend an institution of higher education as defined in section 102 of the Higher Education Act of 1965. All schools that meet this definition have been assigned a Title IV federal school code number.

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**Cost of Attendance 624-10-25-15-10-15
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The cost of attendance is calculated by the institution of higher education in establishing a youth's financial need and can vary depending on the student's full-time or part-time status, and where the student is receiving instruction. In general, the definition includes a student's:

- Tuition, fees, and other equipment or materials required of all students in the same course of study.
- Books, supplies and an allowance for transportation costs and miscellaneous personal expenses, including computers
- Room and board (which may vary depending on whether the student lives at home, in student-housing or an apartment)
- Child care expenses for a student who is a parent
- Accommodations related to the student's disability, such as a personal assistant or specialized equipment that is not paid for by another source
- Expenses related to the youth's work experience in a cooperative education program
- Student loan fees or insurance premiums on the student loan.

The Institution of Higher Education calculates the "cost of attendance" for all students in general, and have some flexibility in determining costs of attendance for individual students. For those ETV applicants who have additional expenses that were not included in the school's calculation of the "cost of attendance", it is in their best interest to work with the school to have this figure raised to reflect their actual needs. The Regional IL Coordinator will assist the student in working with the school as needed.

The Department requires that documentation from the Institution of Higher Education to support the ETV applicant's "Cost of Attendance" figure be included in the application packet. The Department will not issue an ETV award without this documentation.

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**Lifetime Maximum 624-10-25-15-10-20
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The lifetime maximum ETV award for an individual is \$20,000.

**Satisfactory Academic Progress 624-10-25-15-10-25
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An eligible student may continue to receive ETV funds as long as they are in good standing and making progress towards completing their program or graduation. This means earning no less than a 2.0 GPA tow semester in a row or passing marks in a technical/vocational program.

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**Probationary Status 624-10-25-15-10-25-05
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A student who is receiving ETV funding will be placed on Probationary Status if their overall GPA is less than a 2.0 at the end of the semester. The student will have one semester to raise their GPA to 2.0 or higher to remain eligible for ETV funding for subsequent semesters. Regional Independent Living Coordinators will work with the youth to determine what resources may be helpful to the student.

**Credit Hour Standards 624-10-25-15-10-30
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There is no minimum required number of credit hours needed to receive ETV Funds.

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**Out-of-State Youth 624-10-25-15-10-35
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The state in which a former foster youth resides is responsible for providing an eligible youth with a voucher. This provision, however, does not apply to a former foster care youth who already is receiving a voucher and moves to another State for the sole purpose of attending and institution of higher education. In that instance, the youth's original State of residence will continue to provide a voucher to the youth for as long as the youth remains eligible for the program.

ETV Recipient's Eligibility for Chafee Flex Funds 624-10-25-15-10-40

(9/15/06 ML 3048)

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Chafee Flex Funds may not be used to supplement the \$5,000 per year ceiling for a youth in the ETV Program for "cost of attendance related expenses. Appropriations law precludes this. However, if the Regional IL Coordinator and the Child and Family Team determines that the youth has expenses that are not related to the cost of attendance, therefore not allowable under the ETV, it is an option to supplement ETV funding with Flex Funds.

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Use of ETV Funds to Obtain a GED
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ETV funding cannot be used to obtain a GED.

**Use of ETV Funds to Pay Back Previous Student
Loans 624-10-25-15-10-50**

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This is prohibited.

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**Maximum Age Requirements 624-10-25-15-10-55
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Students must have participated in the ETV Program prior to their 21st birthday to continue receiving ETV funds until age 23. There is no flexibility for funding youth who are over 21 and have not already been involved with the ETV Program before their 21st birthday. Students are not eligible for the ETV after their 23rd birthday.

ETV Award Maximum Per Year 624-10-25-15-10-60
(Revised 12/22/06 ML 3059)

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The total Educational Aid Package, (including the ETV, Loans, Scholarships, and Grants) may not exceed the cost of attendance. In addition, the maximum ETV allowable per year shall not exceed the lesser of \$5,000 per year or the total cost of attendance, as defined in section 472 of the Higher Education Act of 1965.

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**ETV Application Process 624-10-20-15-15
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All youth/young adults pursuing ETV Funding must currently be involved in, or agree to be involved in, the “Former Foster Youth” Component of the Regional Independent Living Program. Programming will be individualized, according to the youth’s needs. At a minimum, ETV recipients will need to participate in the assessment and data collection processes.

The Regional Independent Living Coordinator will assist all youth and young adults applying for an ETV. Applications are available on-line (SFN 252 and SFN 255).

The completed application is forwarded to Children and Family Services for award determination.

Award Determination 624-10-25-15-20 (Revised 12/22/06 ML 3059)

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Award Determinations are made by the Department of Human Services and are based on the following:

1. All aspects of eligibility
2. ETV Funding Availability
3. Completeness of Application Packet

Not all youth who meet the eligibility criteria will receive an ETV Award. Likewise, not all youth who receive an ETV will receive the \$5,000 per year maximum.

Under Federal law, States are required to take appropriate steps to prevent duplication of benefits under the ETV and other Federal and Federally supported programs.

The Department cannot change the Cost of Attendance figure, nor can the Department award more than the following formula allows:

Cost of Attendance minus the amount of other Federal Funded Loans, Grants and Scholarships which is accepted by the student equals the ETV Award.

Awards cannot be determined if application packets are incomplete.

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**Award Disbursement 624-10-25-15-25
(9/15/06 ML 3048)**

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The Department of Human Services will issue the awards directly to the Institution of Higher Education.

Independent Living Programming and Plans for Current Foster Youth 624-10-30

Independent Living Program Referrals 624-10-30-05 (9/15/06 ML 3048)

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The custodian will refer youth, age 16 and older, who have been identified as 'likely to age out of care' to the Regional Independent Living Coordinator. The Custodians will invite the Regional IL Coordinator to be a member of the Child and Family Team, and extend invitations to all future meetings. Copies of the Single Plan of Care will be provided to the Regional Coordinator.

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**Independent Living Plans 624-10-30-10
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The youth should not have an Independent Living Plan in addition to the Single Plan of Care. The youth's Independent Living Plan should be incorporated into the Single Plan of Care whenever possible.

The Single Plan of Care Document will include needs, goals and tasks related to Independent Living, and will serve as the Independent Living Plan.

Regional Coordinators will be active members of the Child and Family Team for all youth they are working with.

**Independent Living Assessments 624-10-30-15
(9/15/06 ML 3048)**

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It is required that all foster youth, age 16 and older, have their Independent Living Strengths and Needs assessed.

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**Assessments for Foster Youth Participating in a
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624-10-30-15-05**

(9/15/06 ML 3048)

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The Regional IL Coordinator will complete the Ansel-Casey Life Skills Assessment Process.

An adult fitting the role of “care-taker” of the youth may also asked to complete a separate version of the Ansel-Casey Life Skills Assessment, which will provide a more comprehensive view of the youth’s needs.

The Regional Independent Living Coordinator will attend the youth’s Child and Family team meeting. Results of the Strengths and Needs Assessment(s) will be discussed, and input from the team will be gathered. The Custodian will incorporate the “strengths and needs” into the Single Plan of Care Document.

**IL Assessments for Foster Youth, Age 16-18, Not
Participating in a Regional IL Program
624-10-30-15-10**

(9/15/06 ML 3048)

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All foster youth, age 16 and older, are required to have their strengths and needs relating to Independent Living assessed.

The custodian, in collaboration with the Child and Family Team, will assess the Independent Living Strengths and Needs, of those youth, age 16 and older, which have **not** been identified as “likely to age out of care”, thus are not participating in the Regional Independent Living Program. The Strengths and Needs Assessment, currently being completed as part of the Single Plan of Care Document will be utilized. Custodians have the option of completing an Ansel-Casey Assessment to assist them with determining the youth’s needs. The youth’s Independent Living needs will be incorporated into the Single Plan of Care.

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**Addressing the Independent Living Needs
624-10-30-20**

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All foster youth, age 16 and older, are required to have their needs relating to Independent Living addressed.

**Addressing the IL Needs of Foster Youth
Participating in a Regional Independent Living
Program 624-10-30-20-05**

(9/15/06 ML 3048)

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Based on the results of the Strengths and Needs Assessment(s), the Regional IL Coordinator and the Child and Family Team will establish goals and incorporate them into the Single Plan of Care. Goals should be individualized according to the strengths and needs of the youth.

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**Addressing the IL Needs of Foster Youth, Not
Participating in a Regional Independent Living
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Based on the results of the Strengths and Needs Assessment(s), the custodian, in collaboration with the Child and Family Team, will establish goals, which will be incorporated into the Single Plan of Care document. Goals are individualized according to the strengths and needs of the youth.

Independent Living Related Goals 624-10-30-25

Goals for Foster Youth Participating in a Regional Independent Living Program 624-10-30-25-05

(9/15/06 ML 3048)

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Goals are individualized according to the youth's strengths and needs. Goals are focused on the 7 outcomes as identified in 624-10-10-15-05. Goals are discussed at the Child and Family Team Meeting and are incorporated into the Single Plan of Care Document/Independent Living Plan. The Regional Independent Living Coordinator, in conjunction with the Child and Family Team, will collaboratively assist the youth with meeting these goals.

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**Goals for Foster Youth Not Participating in a Regional
Independent Living Program 624-10-30-25-10
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Goals are individualized according to the youth's strengths and needs. Goals are focused on the 7 outcomes as identified by Chafee. Goals are discussed at the Child and Family Team Meeting and are incorporated into the Single Plan of Care Document. The Child and Family Team will collaboratively assist the youth with meeting these goals. The Regional Independent Living Coordinator will be available for consultation, as needed.

Independent Living Related Tasks 624-10-30-30

Task Responsibility for Youth Participating in a Regional Independent Living Program 624-10-30-30-05

(9/15/06 ML 3048)

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Each Child and Family Team Member brings their own strengths, interests, and connections to the table and tasks are assigned accordingly. Consideration is given to inviting informal resources, and other community members to join the team to assist the youth with reaching goals. The Regional IL Coordinator's role is to be a team member, and is not expected to carry out all of the tasks relating to IL.

Referrals to Community Partners are encouraged. Examples of Community Partners who are available to assist adolescent youth are as follows:

1. The Education System
2. Housing Authority
3. Workforce Investment Act Programs

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**Task Assignment for Youth Not Participating in a
Regional Independent Living Program
624-10-30-30-10
(9/15/06 ML 3048)**

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Each Child and Family Team Member brings their own strengths, interests, and connections to the table and tasks are assigned accordingly. Consideration is given to inviting informal resources, and other community members to join the team to assist the youth with reaching goals. The Regional IL Coordinator is available for consultation if needed.

Referrals to Community Partners are encouraged. Examples of Community Partners who are available to assist adolescent youth are as follows:

1. The Education System
2. Housing Authority
3. Workforce Investment Act Programs

Independent Living Programming for Former Foster Youth 624-10-35

Independent Living Referrals for Former Foster Youth 624-10-35-05

(9/15/06 ML 3048)

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Custodians are required to inform foster youth, who are aging out of care, of services available to them through the Regional Independent Living Program.

Regional Independent Living Programs are required to provide services to eligible youth who have aged out of foster care.

Most young adults will be self referrals, or referrals from Community Partners.

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**Independent Living Plans for Former Foster Youth
624-10-35-10**

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When at all possible, the Single Plan of Care Document should continue to be utilized following the youth's discharge from foster care.

Regional IL Coordinators should continue to use the Wraparound Process, including the Child and Family Team, whenever possible.

At this time, the use of the Ansel-Casey IL Plans is acceptable.

Independent Living Assessments for Former Foster Youth 624-10-35-15

(9/15/06 ML 3048)

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All former foster youth entering the program will have their Independent Living Strengths and Needs assessed through the appropriate Ansel-Casey Life Skills Assessment.

Another adult who has a relationship with the youth may also be asked to complete a separate version of the Ansel-Casey Life Skills Assessment, which will provide a more comprehensive view of the youth's needs.

The Regional Independent Living Coordinator will base the young adult's Independent Living Plan on the results of the assessment.

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**Addressing the Independent Living Needs of Former
Foster Youth 624-10-35-20**

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All eligible former foster youth participating in a Regional IL Program, are required to have their needs relating to Independent Living addressed.

Whenever possible, the Regional IL Coordinators will use a team process, similar to the former Child and Family Team.

Based on the results of the Strengths and Needs Assessment(s), the Regional IL Coordinator, with the assistance of the team, if applicable, will establish goals and incorporate them into the Independent Living Plan. Goals should be individualized according to the strengths and needs of the youth.

Independent Living Related Goals for Former Foster Youth 624-10-35-25

(9/15/06 ML 3048)

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Goals are individualized according to the youth's strengths and needs. Goals are focused on the 7 outcomes as identified by Chafee. Goals are incorporated into the Independent Living Plan. The Regional Independent Living Coordinator, in conjunction with the team, if applicable, will collaboratively assist the youth with meeting these goals.

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Independent Living Related Tasks for Former Foster Youth 624-10-35-30
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The Regional IL Coordinator and the team, if applicable, assist the young adult with reaching their goals. Consideration is given to inviting informal resources, and other community members to join the team to assist the youth with reaching goals.

Referrals to Community Partners are encouraged. Examples of Community Partners who are available to assist adolescent youth are as follows:

1. The Education System
2. Housing Authority
3. Workforce Investment Act Programs

Chafee Flexible Funding 624-10-40
(9/15/06 ML 3048)

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Flex Funds are payments made, or tangible resources given, directly to the eligible youth, or made on behalf of the eligible youth. Flex Funds fall into two categories: General and Room and Board.

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General Flex Funds 624-10-40-05
(9/15/06 ML 3048)

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General Flex Funds may be used to provide reasonable incentives to youth to encourage program participation or goal achievement. These funds may also be used to pay for goods or services on behalf of a youth or young adult. These funds can be applied to a variety of non-housing related expenses that are barriers to a youth's transition. Appropriate use of these funds will improve his or her likelihood of achieving self-sufficiency.

General Flex Funds Eligibility Requirements

624-10-40-05-05

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To be considered for Flex Funds a youth must:

1. Be between the ages of 16 and 21, **and**
2. Be a current foster care youth, or have been in foster care at the age of 16 or older, **and**
3. Be participating in a Regional Chafee Program, **and**
4. Have a current Single Plan of Care/IL Plan.

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Accessing General Flex Funds 624-10-40-05-10

**For Current Foster Youth 624-10-40-05-10-05
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The Child and Family Team, including the Regional IL Coordinator, will discuss requests for General Flex Funds. The following questions will be answered and documented in the Single Plan of Care/Independent Living Plan:

1. How will these funds help the youth successfully transition from Foster care to self-sufficiency?
2. What other resources are available to assist the youth?
3. Is this an expense that would have been paid for from another source if these funds were not available?
4. What efforts to avoid sup plantation have been made?
5. What is the minimum amount of funds required to meet this need?

**For Former Foster Youth 624-10-40-05-10-10
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The Regional IL Coordinator will document the answers to the following questions, in the Independent Living Plan:

1. Is this young adult at high risk of not making a successful transition to self-sufficiency if we don't do something now?
What are the factors contributing to that risk?
2. Does the use of these funds in this way have a reasonable chance of reducing that risk?
3. Is the youth adult doing his/her share to work toward reduction of this risk? (i.e. change in behaviors, actively working on the problem, payments toward the cost of resolution, etc...)
4. What other resources are available to help reduce the risk further?
5. What is the minimum amount of funds required to help reduce this risk?

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**General Flex Fund Determination 624-10-40-05-15
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The Regional IL Coordinator will make the final determination regarding the flex fund request. The determination will be based on need, and availability of funding. The State Independent Living Administration will assist with the determination if necessary.

**General Flex Fund Cap 624-10-40-05-20
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\$250.00 per youth per calendar year.

Eligible youth are not “entitled” to flex funds. Due to the limited amount of funds available, most youth will not receive this amount. Requests will be prioritized as determined by the youth’s needs.

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Room and Board Flex Funds 624-10-40-10
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Room and Board Flex Funds are used to assist the young adult with rent, deposits, room and board arrangements, and utilities. Funding is intended to help youth get moved into a permanent home, not to prolong unnecessary dependency nor to pay for continued residential treatment.

Room and Board Flex Funds Eligibility Requirements 624-10-40-10-05

(9/15/06 ML 3048)

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To be considered for Room and Board Flex Funds a youth must:

1. Be between the ages of 18 – 21, and
2. Have “aged out of foster care”, and
3. Be participating in a Regional Chafee Program, and
4. Have a current Independent Living Plan.

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**Accessing Room and Board Flex Funds
624-10-40-10-10**

**For Eligible Former Foster Youth 624-10-40-10-10-05
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The Regional IL Coordinator will document the answers to the following questions in the Independent Living Plan:

1. Is this young adult at high risk of not making a successful transition to self-sufficiency if we don't do something now? What are the factors contributing to that risk?
2. Does the use of these funds in this way have a reasonable chance of reducing that risk?
3. Is the youth adult doing his/her share to work toward reduction of this risk? (i.e. change in behaviors, actively working on the problem, payments toward the cost of resolution, etc...)
4. What other resources are available to help reduce the risk further?
5. What is the minimum amount of funds required to help reduce this risk?

**Room and Board Flex Fund Determination
624-10-40-10-15**

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The Regional IL Coordinator will make the final determination regarding the flex fund request. The determination will be based on need, and availability of funding. The State Independent Living Administration will assist with the determination if necessary.

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**Room and Board Flex Fund Cap 624-10-40-10-20
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\$1,000 per youth per lifetime. Youth are not “entitled” to flex funds. Due to the limited amount of funds available, most youth will not receive these amounts. Requests will be prioritized as determined by the youth’s needs.

Flexible Funding Guidelines 624-10-40-15 (9/15/06 ML 3048)

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Programs will be provided with a Flex Fund Budget. This will be the total amount of funds available to the Region for the fiscal year, and there will be no additional funds available from the Department. These funds are to be made available to eligible youth (who are participating in services with the Regional IL Coordinator) throughout the region, not just the county where the program is located. The Regional Coordinators are responsible for tracking these expenditures to assure that they do not pay out more funds that can be reimbursed. The Coordinators are also responsible for completing the reporting requirements documenting these expenditures. These funds are to be used in their entirety as a flexible funding source to assist youth with meeting the goals on their Single Plan of Care/Chafee Plan. Agencies will have the flexibility to develop their own procedures regarding the disbursement of funds to youth.

The following state and federal requirements must be adhered to in the program's flex fund procedure:

- Coordinators must document that the youth meets CFCIP eligibility criteria.
- Youth receiving funding must be full participants in the program, and have a Single Plan of Care/Chafee Plan
- Room and Board funds can only be dispersed to youth meeting the criteria for Room and Board.
- Agencies must develop a record of individual expenditures, clearly indicating what expenditures are designated Room and Board. This record will be forwarded to the Department as part of the quarterly and year-end reporting process.
 - Funding will be utilized to meet the goals on the youth's transition.
 - The CFCIP is not to be used as strictly a "funding source". The funding is limited, and existing community resources and other funding sources should be exhausted prior to utilizing CFCIP funds.

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- Agencies are responsible for keeping receipts for all youth expenditures.
 - 100% of these funds must be used as direct financial assistance and/or incentives to youth. Any remaining funds will be returned to the Department.
 - Counties will not be reimbursed for flex fund expenditures over and above the yearly amount awarded to the agency.
 - The amount of your total monthly flex fund expenditures must be included on your agency's **Independent Living Monthly Expenditure Claim Form**, which is submitted to the Department on a monthly basis.
 - Counties will be reimbursed by submitting SFN 119 to the Department on a monthly basis.

All flex fund requests and inquiries that the Department receives from outside sources regarding Chafee flex funds for youth will be directed to the Regional Independent Living Coordinator. The Regional Coordinator, Custodian, and Child and Family Team will determine if the youth will be referred to the Regional IL Coordinator. Only those youth who are full participants in the program, and have a Single Plan of Care/Chafee Plan will be eligible for flex funds.

Flex Fund Expenditures Not Allowed 624-10-40-20 (9/15/06 ML 3048)

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Flexible Funds are provided in order to help eligible youth and young adults successfully transition from foster care to self-sufficiency. Any expenditure that does not meet the above principle for the use of Chafee funds is not allowed. Chafee funds may not be used to take the place of (supplant) Federal or state funds that are otherwise available for the same purposes. Federally funded day care, subsidized housing, foster care administration and training, adoption assistance, TANF, Child Protective Services, etc. are federally funded programs that may also touch Chafee eligible youth and young adults. Additionally, Chafee funds may not be used to match other Federal Funds. Extreme caution should be exercised when using Chafee funds to assure that supplantation does not occur. If a worker is considering using Chafee funds for an expense that would have been paid from other sources were these funds not available, supplantation should be ruled out prior to proceeding. Efforts to avoid supplantation should be documented in the Single Plan of Care/Chafee Plan.

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**Independent Living Programming in Relation to
Permanency 624-10-45
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A decision to provide independent living services to a youth does not absolve the state from continuing to make reasonable efforts toward permanence for the youth. Independent Living is not a permanency goal, and is not an alternative to adoption for children who are eligible. The Act specifies that enrollment in independent living programs should occur concurrently with continued efforts to locate and achieve permanency.

Focus on Permanent Connections 624-10-45-05 (9/15/06 ML 3048)

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All teens in foster care have some emotional attachments to others in order to have survived. They have created their own “families.” These “families” may consist of friends, parents of friends, current and/or former foster parents, teachers, coaches, cottage parents, maintenance staff, relatives, older siblings or friends who are now adults, neighbors, church members, Guardians ad Litem, social workers, employers, counselors, etc. We need to ask these youth about these connections and to help them strengthen these relationships. There are often more than a dozen people currently in each youth’s life that could be approached about offering a permanent home to the youth. Asking youth to invite persons of their own choosing to participate in their planning reviews helps us to know who some of these people are.

1. Establishing a mentor program within the Chafee program, matching the youth with a volunteer who has similar interests;
2. Researching the interest of relatives, neighbors, and friends who were once involved with the youth as a younger child but have since lost contact;
3. Contacting older siblings who are now on their own;
4. Helping the youth to develop Eco-maps to identify their support systems;
5. Involving youth in volunteer activities that also engage adult volunteers from faith and civic groups, such as blood drives, environmental restoration, working one on one with disabled children, fund drives for community recreation programs, etc.; and
6. Involving community persons in the Chafee program as volunteers.

Even if these activities or efforts do not result in adoptive placements, they will help youth to develop the kinds of friendships and supports that they will need as adults.

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Dorothy Ansell of The National Resource Center for Youth Development had this observation about permanency: "In reality, permanency is not a placement. It is a state of mind. It is about positive relationships. It is knowing that there is someone out there with whom you are so strongly connected that they will always be there for you, at any time of day or night. It is knowing that you have a family who will celebrate birthdays, weddings and graduations with you. It is knowing where you will go and what will be expected of you on important holidays. It means being connected, legally or not, through relationships that last a lifetime...."¹

In spite of our misconceptions, young people do want to be a part of a family, perhaps not the standard sort of family that was portrayed on television in the '50's, but a more eclectic family. If we asked them, they could probably tell us who their family members would be.

¹ "Permanency vs. Independent Living," Youth Development Update, Fall/Winter 2002. National Resource Center for Youth Development, University of Oklahoma College of Continuing Education and ACYF.

Out-of-State Youth 624-10-50
(9/15/06 ML 3048)[View Archives](#)

If a youth in foster care, who meets eligibility for IL Programming, is placed in another state, the state of origin must fund the identified services for that youth. The sending state is also responsible for foster care maintenance payments and case planning, which includes a written description of the programs and services that will be provided to help a child 16 or over prepare for the transition from foster care to independence, and a case review system.

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**Eligibility for Youth in Kinship or Relative Care
Placements 624-10-55
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Youth in Kinship or Relative Care Placements, ages 14 to 21, who are under the custody of the state, and part of the foster care system, are eligible for consideration in the Current Foster Youth and Former Foster Youth components of the IL Program, as well as eligible for consideration for General Flex Funds. Priority Status will be based on the youth's individualized needs, and service availability.

For the purposes of Chafee ETV and Room and Board Flex Fund eligibility, youth in kinship or relative care placements, must meet the definition of "aging out of foster care". All of the following conditions must be present to meet the "Aging Out of Foster Care" requirement":

1. County retains custody until the age of 18.
2. There is a current court order at the time the youth turns 18.
3. Youth is open within the foster care system on their 18th birthday.
4. Child and Family Team Meetings are occurring as required, with the latest being held within 3 months of the youth's 18th birthday.
5. The youth as a Current Single Plan of Care at the time of the 18th birthday.

Eligibility for Youth Under a Guardianship 624-10-60

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Youth who are under a Guardianship, ages 14 – 21, are eligible for consideration for the Current Foster Youth Component, as well as the Former Foster Youth Component. They are also eligible for consideration for General Flex Funds. The priority status will be based on the youth's individualized needs and circumstances; and program availability.

Youth turning age 18 while under a guardianship are not eligible for Room and Board Flex Funds, or the Education and Training Voucher Program.

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**Chafee Eligibility for Adopted Youth 624-10-65
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Youth who were adopted after 16 years of age are eligible for the Education and Training Voucher Component, providing they meet all criteria excluding the “Aging Out of Care” criteria.

Youth who were adopted, regardless of their age, are not eligible for Room and Board Flex Funds.

Youth who were adopted after 14 years of age are eligible for consideration for the Current Foster Youth Component, as well as the Former Foster Youth component. They are also eligible for consideration for General Flex Funds. The priority status will be based on the youth’s individualized needs and circumstances; and program availability.

Chafee Eligibility for Incarcerated Youth 624-10-70 (9/15/06 ML 3048)

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Youth who are incarcerated are not eligible for Chafee Services or funds. If the incarcerated youth was previously in foster care and is in need of transitional services, they are eligible for the Current and/or Former Foster Youth Components of the Chafee services, as well as General Flex Funds, once the period of incarceration is completed and if they have not reached the age of 21.

Unless these youth meet the definition of "Aging Out of Foster Care" they are not eligible for Room and Board Flex Funds, or the Education and Training Voucher Program.

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**Chafee Eligibility for Undocumented Immigrant Youth
624-10-75**

(9/15/06 ML 3048)

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If youth are in the custody of the state child welfare agency, whether or not they are citizens or legal residents of the U.S., they are eligible for all needed child welfare services, including Chafee services/funding. Service providers, caseworkers, and advocates should keep in mind that the process for acquiring legal status is lengthy, and that young people who reach the age of 18 without legal status are at very high risk of detention and /or deportation by immigration authorities. Unaccompanied minors who enter foster care may be categorically eligible for citizenship under special provisions for juveniles (Special Juvenile Immigrant Status). The child welfare agency is responsible for pursuing this status on behalf of youth in care and for costs incurred in the legal process of pursuing citizenship.

**Chafee Eligibility for Youth with Disabilities
624-10-80**

(9/15/06 ML 3048)

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All provisions of the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 are equally applicable to young people with disabilities.

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**Chafee Eligibility for Native American Youth
624-10-85**

(9/15/06 ML 3048)

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Chafee services and funding are to be made available to Native American children in the state on the same basis as other children. Chafee Coordinators shall pay particular effort in identifying Native American youth who are eligible for the program, and to eliminate barriers to their participation.

Roles and Responsibilities 624-10-90

Roles and Responsibilities of DHS 624-10-90-05

(9/15/06 ML 3048)

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- Administer the Chafee Grant, including Grant Applications, Overall Budget, Procurement Officer
- Oversee Regional Programs
- Overseeing the Development of the State Plan and Policy
- Regional Budgets, and Memorandum of Agreements
- Advocating for the expansion of services at the state level
- Coordinating quarterly CFCIP quarterly IL Meetings/Training
- Monitoring program outcomes
- On-site regional program visits/monitoring for compliance w/state & federal requirements
- Completion of IV-B Report
- Representing the state at national and regional CFCIP meetings
- Determination of Education and Training Voucher Awards.
- Facilitate State Youth Leadership Component
- Reviewing and approving Provider Monthly Expenditure Claim Forms
- Providing reimbursement to Provider Agencies
- Assist the providers with filling vacant Regional IL Coordinator Positions

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**Roles and Responsibilities of Regional IL
Coordinators 624-10-90-10
(9/15/06 ML 3048)**

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- Assist custodians with identify youth who are age 16 and older, and who are likely to remain in care until the age of 18.
- Develop a good working relationship with eligible teens and young adults, their caregivers, custodians, informal supports and social workers, using a positive youth development and wraparound approach;
- Develop and conduct a relevant and effective program;
- Partner with the broader community to provide a supportive learning environment for foster/former foster youth, which may include engaging community partners in mentoring, job placement, providing tangible supports to the Chafee Program, sponsoring youth, educating youth about subjects such as banking, credit, car purchases, comparison shopping, and other life skill areas;
- Verify eligibility for Chafee Flex Funds;
- Assure that Chafee expenditures are allowable;
- Assure that supplantation of funds does not occur;
- Identify and document available match dollars;
- Assist eligible young adults with the ETV process;
- Consult with the state coordinator as needed;
- Conduct diligent efforts to obtain follow-up data on youth who have exited the program;
- Provide an ongoing Regional Youth Leadership/Advocacy Component
- Advocate for foster/former foster youth; encourage youth to be self-advocates and leaders;

- Assist provider agency with developing an annual budget for the Region's Chafee Program;
- Respond to requests for data from the state coordinator;
- Provide quarterly and year end reports to state coordinator;
- Participate in required training and meetings;
- Provide documentation of flex fund expenditures to your agency's fiscal office on a monthly basis. (Documentation is necessary for reimbursement. Audits will be completed at site visits.)
- Include input from foster/former foster youth in program design and implementation.
- Administer assessments and develop plans.
- Participate in Child and Family Team Meetings for all youth involved in your Regional IL Program.

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**Roles and Responsibilities of IL Program Provider
Agencies 624-10-90-15
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- Administer programming in accordance with DHS independent Living Policy
- Adhere to Chafee Foster Care Independence Program State and Federal Guidelines.
- Issue prompt payment in response to approved flexible funding requests made by the Regional IL Coordinator
- Submit the Monthly Expenditures claim Form to State IL Administrator by the 5th day of the subsequent month.
- Submit the completed SFN 119 form to Fiscal Administration by the 10th day of the subsequent month.
- Keep required documentation for all IL Expenditures, including Flex Fund Expenditures.
- Provide supervision of the Regional Independent Living Staff.
- Work collaboratively with DHS to provide Regional Program supervision
- Obtain approval from State IL Administrator prior to making program changes.
- Provide a written request pertaining to any line item changes in the proposed budget
- Fill vacant Regional IL Coordinator positions in a timely manner.
- Ensure that Regional IL Coordinators meet required qualifications.

Roles and Responsibilities of Foster Parents 624-05-90-20

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- Collaborate with the Chafee Coordinator and Custodian regarding the Youth's needs/goals pertaining to Independent Living.
- Participate in Child and Family Team Meetings
- Implement agreed upon tasks as identified in the Single Plan of Care.
- Provide youth with tools, resources, and hands-on learning experiences relating to Independent Living.

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Roles and Responsibilities of Residential Facilities
624-10-90-25

(9/15/06 ML 3048)

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- Implement agreed upon tasks as identified in the Single Plan of Care.
- Collaborate with the Chafee Coordinator and Custodian regarding the Youth's needs/goals pertaining to Independent Living.
- Participate in Child and Family Team Meetings.
- Implement programming to meet the youth's identified Independent Living Needs.

Roles and Responsibilities of Custodians 624-10-90-30

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Regarding youth age 16 and older, identified as likely to remain in care until their 18th birthday:

- Identify, and refer to the Regional IL Coordinator, those current foster care youth, age 16 and older, who have been identified as likely to remain in care until the age of 18.
- Extend invitations to Regional Chafee Coordinators to attend the Foster Care Child and Family Team Meetings for all youth participating in the Chafee Independent Living Program.
- Incorporate the identified strengths, needs and goals relating to Independent Living into the Single Plan of Care Document.
- Encourage the Foster Care Child and Family Team Members to complete identified tasks.
- Encourage the youth to participate in the "Former Foster Youth Component" following their discharge.
- Inform youth that it is an option to remain in foster care past their 18th birthday for the purpose of completing high school, pursuing vocational training, or attending college.

Regarding youth age 16 and older, identified as not likely to remain in care until their 18th birthday:

- Utilize the Foster Care Child and Family Team to assess the Youth's strengths and needs pertaining to Independent Living.
- Determine, with the assistance of the Foster Care Child and Family Team, and the Regional IL Coordinator, if the youth's particular situation warrants a referral to Regional IL Coordinator.
- Incorporate the youth's strengths and needs into the tasks and goals under a relevant domain pertaining to Independent Living in the Single Plan of Care.
- Encourage the Foster Care Child and Family Team members to implement assigned tasks.

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- Collaborate with, and complete referrals to Community Partners as needed to address the youth's Independent Living needs.
- Consult with the Regional Chafee Coordinator as needed.

Roles and Responsibilities of Community Partners 624-10-90-35

(9/15/06 ML 3048)

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- Collaborate with the Chafee Coordinator and Custodian regarding the Youth's needs/strengths/goals pertaining to Independent Living.
- Participate in Child and Family team Meetings as requested.
- Implement agreed upon tasks as identified in the Single Plan of Care

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Youth Leadership/Advocacy Component 624-10-95

**State Level Youth Leadership/Advocacy Component
624-10-95-05**

(9/15/06 ML 3048)

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DHS will implement a Youth Leadership/Advocacy Component on the state level.

**Regional Level Youth Leadership/Advocacy
Component 624-10-95-10**

(9/15/06 ML 3048)

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Regional IL Coordinators will implement an ongoing Youth Leadership/Advocacy Component within each of their Regions.

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**Quality Assurance/Data Collection Measures
624-10-100**

(9/15/06 ML 3048)

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Regional IL Coordinators will follow all required Assessment and Data Collection Procedures.

Regional IL Coordinators will make diligent efforts to locate former foster youth for the completion of the required Chafee Assessments. It is recommended that the youth provide the coordinator with several contact persons upon discharge from the program.

The Regional IL Coordinator will submit the required Quarterly and Year-end Reports to the State Office according to the following schedule:

Report #	Time Period	Date Due
Quarter 1	October 1 - December 31	February 1
Quarter 2	January 1 - March 31	May 1
Quarter 3	April 1 - June 30	August 1
Quarter 4	July 1 - September 30	November 1
Year End	October 1 - September 30	November 1